

NAUSARJAN TRUST

Discussion

Discrimination and Positive measures/affirmative action

Thank you Madame Chair, for having given me opportunity to speak in midst of eminent delegates from different parts of the world. I come from India and I represent more than 167 millions of Dalits, the so called 'untouchables', who are discriminated on the basis of their descent and occupation. India has attained freedom 63 years ago and it has one of the greatest constitutions framed by a national leader born in one of the untouchable communities.

In order to abolish the caste system, there are several measures/affirmative actions being taken up since the framing of the Indian Constitution; wherein Article 16 provides reservation i.e. quotas for Dalits in the public sector. Despite the benefit of reservation, the majority of the Dalits are working in the unorganized sector mainly in the agricultural farms as bonded labourers, daily wage workers, and in the brick kilns where there are no social security measures.

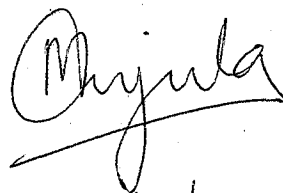
In the public sector, the Dalits are mainly employed in IIIrd and IVth grade jobs as clerks, peons and as sanitation workers. The sanitation workers are employed by the municipalities where they risk their lives by cleaning filth and garbage and also going down inside the manholes.

There is wide scale discrimination against Dalits during recruitment because of their caste and it is done systematically. The government has set up Vocational training centres called as I.T.I.s but again the attitude of the authorities who run these centres does not allow the Dalits to attain vocational skills and become competent.

The majority of the educated Dalit youth is unemployed and there is wide scale discrimination against them in the private sector. A few years back a debate on a bill for reservation for Dalits in the private sector was started. Xxxx

the private companies have set up foundations where they do charitable activities for the marginalised communities and this does not lead to social emancipation of the Dalits.

Therefore the Dalits need further positive measures along with legal safeguards and remedies which creates a non-discriminatory environment leading towards social emancipation of the people who have been discriminated for several centuries in India.



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